

Dance Glossary:

Making Dance More Accessible
for Teaching and Assessing Curriculum



Resources from National Standards for Dance Education, *Choreography: A Basic Approach Using Improvisation*, second edition, by Sandra Cerny Minton, and *Creative Dance for All Ages*, by Anne Green Gilbert
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Alignment: The relationship of the skeleton to the line of gravity and the base of support.

Axial movement: Any movement that is anchored to one spot by a body part using only the available space in any direction without losing the initial body contact. Movement is organized around the axis of the body rather than designed for travel from one location to another; also known as non-locomotor or stationary movement.

Choreography: Many sequences of movement that add together to produce a whole dance with beginning, middle, and conclusion (Cerny Minton, 1997). (Used interchangeably with the term dance)

Creative Dance: The teaching of creative dance combines skill development and self expression. The dance student learns and explores the elements of dance (space, time, force/energy/effort, and body/shape). This kinesthetic experience can be adapted to students of all ages and abilities including adults, and results in the capacity to understand, view and create satisfying dances of one's own (Green Gilbert, 1992).

Dynamics: The expressive side of human movement sometimes called qualities or efforts. Dynamics manifest the interrelationships among the elements of space, time, and force/energy. See also "movement quality."

General Space: General Space is the space we travel through as we move around the room (Green Gilbert, 1992).

Improvisation: Movement that is created spontaneously, ranging from free-form to highly structured environments, but always with an element of chance. Provides the dancer with the opportunity to bring together elements quickly, and requires focus and concentration. Improvisation is instant and simultaneous choreography and performance.

Initiation: Point at which a movement is said to originate. This particularly refers to specific body parts and is generally said to be either distal (from the limbs or head) or central (from the torso).

Intent: The motivation that stimulates movement (Cerny Minton, 1997).



Kinesthetic: Refers to the ability of the body's sensory organs in the muscles, tendons, and joints to respond to stimuli while dancing or viewing a dance.

Levels: The height of the dancer in relation to the floor.

Locomotor movement: Movement that travels from place to place, usually identified by weight transference on the feet. Basic locomotor steps are the walk, run, leap, hop, and jump and the irregular rhythmic combinations of the skip (walk and hop), slide (walk and leap) and gallop (walk and leap).

Movement quality: The identifying attributes created by the release, follow-through, and termination of energy, which are the key to making movement become dance. Typical terms denoting qualities include sustained, swing, percussive, collapse, and vibratory and effort combinations such as float, dab, punch, and glide.

Musicality: The attention and sensitivity to the musical elements of dance while creating or performing.

Personal space: The "space bubble" or the kinesphere that one occupies: it includes all levels, planes, and directions both near and far from the body's center.

Phrase: The smallest and simplest unit of dance form (Blom and Chaplin, 1982).

Phrasing: The building block of dance form. In music, it is a melodic building block equivalent to parts of a complete sentence unit in language (Cerny Minton, 1997).

Warm-Up: Movements and/or movement phrases designed to raise the core body temperature and bring the mind into focus for the dance activities to follow.